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OVERLEAF: St. Valentine's Day, at home and at the front as depicted in "Harper's Weekly" on February 20, 1864.

MORE ON TELEGRAPHIC DEVICE

The November issue of CWTI carried an article about the U.S. Military Telegraph Service, by Col. W. S. Nye, managing editor. One of the illustrations was a drawing by A. R. Waud showing a telegraph operator at Fredericksburg using a portable signal coding machine for sending a message.

A notation by Waud was quoted in the article: "The machine illustrated is a simple one, worked by a handle, which is passed around a dial-plate marked with numerals and the alphabet. By stopping at the necessary letters a message is easily spelled out upon the instrument at the other end of the line."

Colonel Nye raised the question of how such a device could work without Selsyn motors, using alternating current, "which we are fairly certain had not been invented in 1861-65."

Frederic S. Klein, an associate editor, has found a possible answer in an 1853 Patent Office report. The report and drawing are reproduced below. As Professor Klein comments: "It seems possible that as the armature is moved around from a dial at the top, a corresponding armature on a remote magnet would also move, on the same principle as the Selsyn, and indicate the same alphabetic letters at the receiving station . . . I have no idea whether this patent ever worked, but it seems to involve the same principle."

